

New Zealand Class

Autism Provision

Introduction

We at Ardley Hill Academy are proud to introduce New Zealand Class, a brand new specialist Provision opened in September 2016. The Provision is designed to provide education for 8 pupils of primary school age, who have a 'Statement of Special Educational Needs' or 'Education Health Care Plan' which clearly identifies that an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) is their primary need.

Admissions Criteria

The children are assessed for their suitability for New Zealand Class against agreed criteria by a panel of professionals, which includes the County Autism Advisors, members of the County Special Educational Needs Assessment and Monitoring Team and a Senior Educational Psychologist. Pupils selected are those who would have difficulty accessing a mainstream class but have the potential to do so for part of the day if they have a secure base and appropriate structure is put in place to alleviate stress and related behaviours.

Rationale

New Zealand Class is purpose built detached building located on site as part of the main school. It has been decorated and furnished in calming colours and carefully planned so that clear visual areas provide physical structure along the principles of a specialist TEACCH classroom. The building consists of a kitchen, toilets, 'choose' area, social area, calm room and outside play area. Children with ASC need their own space and every child in New Zealand has their own individual work station where independent work is completed. Displays are minimal to avoid distraction, although visual cues and reminders are used. Pupils use visual schedules to provide structure and predictability. This form of organisation accommodates those sensory sensitivities commonly experienced by individuals with ASC.

Staffing

The Provision Co-ordinator is a fully qualified teacher and the 4 experienced Learning Support Assistants are all TEACCH trained and skilled in the care and education of children with ASC.

Academy Hours

To help our pupils have a quiet and calm start and end to their day, New Zealand Class has slightly different hours to that of the main academy. At 9.00am pupils will be greeted by a member of staff at the gate and accompanied to the gate for collection at 3.15pm.

Inclusion

We are an inclusive part of Ardley Hill Academy, following academy policies to create a consistent approach for all our pupils. Pupils of New Zealand Class wear the same uniform as the rest of the academy.

New pupils may spend the first few weeks taught by Provision staff whilst they become familiar with their setting and the routines. These lessons will be designed to meet the needs of individual pupils. Integration into our autism-friendly mainstream classrooms will be introduced gradually depending on individual needs. Integration opportunities are also dependant on the subject, the size and group dynamics of their year group receiving class. New Zealand pupils are encouraged to go on the main playground but also have their own outdoor space. They are also encouraged to participate in whole academy events and trips. Social stories and visual supports will be used to facilitate this inclusion and help prepare the pupil for any changes to their normal routine.

Social and Life Skills

New Zealand's curriculum will include social and life skills lessons that will aim to develop functional independent skills, encourage flexibility of thought and ability to solve problems. Individuals will be encouraged recognise personal strengths and weaknesses and develop awareness of the impact of their own behaviour- learning strategies for managing anxieties and fears. Pupils will be

encouraged to share and take responsibility for their own environment, such as following an after lunch duty rota of clearing up jobs.

Parent Communication

We are committed to working with parents and each pupil will have a diary through which parents and teachers can communicate. The sharing of information is a key factor in the success of our pupils.

Mission Statement

The academy mission statement is 'Learning for Life'. New Zealand will provide a supported programme of learning that facilitates the development of real life independent skills and the ability to relate to other people.